

THE LITERARY EXAMINER.

No. XXII.—SATURDAY, NOV. 29, 1823.

REVIEW OF BOOKS.

Don Juan. Cantos XII. XIII. and XIV.

[Concluded.]

THE commencement of Canto XIV. is distinguished by one of those deep sceptical ponderings which so signally distinguish the poem of *Don Juan* both from its Italian models and every kindred effort. In the following stanzas on Death, the subject of Suicide is finely, and, begging pardon of the exclusively pious, usefully illustrated, in regard to the moral and physical weakness which may lead to it:—

For me, I know nought; nothing I deny,
Admit, reject, condemn; and what know *you*,
Except perhaps that you were born to die?
And both may after all turn out untrue.
An age may come, Font of Eternity,
When nothing shall be either old or new.
Death, so call'd, is a thing which makes men weep,
And yet a third of life is pass'd in sleep.
A sleep without dreams, after a rough day
Of toil, is what we covet most; and yet
How clay shrinks back from more quiescent clay!
The very Suicide that pays his debt
At once without instalments (an old way
Of paying debts, which creditors regret)
Lets out impatiently his rushing breath
Less from disgust of life than dread of death.
'Tis round him, near him, here, there, every where;
And there's a courage which grows out of fear,
Perhaps of all most desperate, which will dare
The worst to *know* it:—when the mountains rear
Their peaks beneath your human foot, and there
You look down o'er the precipice, and drear
The gulf of rock yawns,—you can't gaze a minute
Without an awful wish to plunge within it.
'Tis true, you don't—but, pale and struck with terror,
Retire: but look into your past impression!
And you will find, though shuddering at the mirror
Of your own thoughts, in all their self confession,
The lurking bias, be it truth or error,
To the *unknown*; a secret prepossession,
To plunge with all your fears—but where? You know not,
And that's the reason why you do—or do not.

In allusion to the reception of his various productions, Lord Byron thus observes upon the nature of his own feelings as a writer, and upon one of the causes of the objections to *Don Juan*:—

I think that were I *certain* of success,
 I hardly could compose another line :
 So long I've battled either more or less,
 That no defeat can drive me from the Nine.
 This feeling 'tis not easy to express,
 And yet 'tis not affected, I opine.
 In play, there are two pleasures for your choosing—
 The one is winning, and the other losing.

Besides, my Muse by no means deals in fiction :
 She gathers a repertory of facts,
 Of course with some reserve and slight restriction,
 But mostly sings of human things and acts—
 And that's one cause she meets with contradiction ;
 For too much truth, at first sight, ne'er attracts ;
 And were her object only what's call'd glory,
 With more ease too she'd tell a different story.

Proceeding to the story, we are favoured with a happy sketch of the qualities necessary to a generally agreeable man, and more especially to an *uncoxcombical homme à bonnes fortunes*. We find Don Juan among the foremost in manly sports and the chase, easy and alert in the succeeding festivity, elegant and dextrous in conversation, and as to the dance, our author alone can do him justice :—

And then he danc'd ;—all foreigners excel
 The serious Angles in the eloquence
 Of pantomime ;—he danced, I say, right well,
 With emphasis, and also with good sense—
 A thing in footing indispensable :
 He danced without theatrical pretence,
 Not like a ballet-master in the van
 Of his drill'd nymphs, but like a gentleman.

Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound,
 And elegance was sprinkled o'er his figure ;
 Like swift Camilla, he scarce skimm'd the ground,
 And rather held in than put forth his vigour ;
 And then he had an ear for music's sound,
 Which might defy a Crotchets Critic's rigour.
 Such classic pas—sans flaws—set off our hero,
 He glanced like a personified Bolero ;

Or, like a flying Hour before Aurora,
 In Guido's famous fresco, which alone
 Is worth a tour to Rome, although no more a
 Remnant were there of the old world's sole throne.
 The "*tout ensemble*" of his movements wore a
 Grace of the soft Ideal, seldom shown,
 And ne'er to be described ; for to the dolour
 Of bards and prozers, words are void of colour.

No marvel then he was a favourite ;
 A full-grown Cupid, very much admired ;
 A little spoilt, but by no means so quite ;
 At least he kept his vanity retired.
 Such was his tact, he could alike delight
 The chaste, and those who are not so much inspired.
 The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke, who loved "*tracasserie*,"
 Began to treat him with some small "*agacerie*."

She was a fine and somewhat full-blown blonde,
 Desirable, distinguish'd, celebrated
 For several winters in the grand, *grand Monde*.
 I'd rather not say what might be related
 Of her exploits, for this were ticklish ground ;
 Besides there might be falsehood in what's stated :

Her late performance had been a dead set
At Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

The circle smiled, then whisper'd, and then sneer'd ;
The Misses bridled, and the matrons frown'd ;
Some hoped things might not turn out as they fear'd ;
Some would not deem such women could be found ;
Some ne'er believ'd one half of what they heard ;
Some look'd perplex'd, and others look'd profound ;
And several pitied with sincere regret
Poor Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

The story here takes a perceptible step forward.

But, oh that I should ever pen so sad a line !
Fired with an abstract love of virtue, she,
My Dian of the Ephesians, Lady Adeline,
Began to think the Duchess' conduct free ;
Regretting much that she had chosen so bad a line,
And waxing chiller in her courtesy,
Looked grave and pale to see her friend's fragility,
For which most friends reserve their sensibility.

The Lady Adeline's serene severity
Was not confined to feeling for her friend,
Whose fame she rather doubted with posterity,
Unless her habits should begin to mend ;
But Juan also shared in her austerity,
But mix'd with pity, pure as e'er was penn'd :
His inexperience moved her gentle ruth,
And (as her junior by six weeks) his youth.

There is a little of the Mephistophiles in the developement of the female heart acting under and operated upon by such distressing predicaments. The husband is also well painted:—

And first, in the o'erflowing of her heart,
Which really knew or thought it knew no guile,
She called her husband now and then apart,
And bade him counsel Juan. With a smile
Lord Henry heard her plans of artless art
To wean Don Juan from the Siren's wile ;
And answer'd, like a Statesman or a Prophet,
In such guise that she could make nothing of it.

Firstly, he said, " he never interfered
" In any body's business but the king's :"
Next, that " he never judged from what appear'd,
" Without strong reason, of those sorts of things :"
Thirdly, that " Juan had more brain than beard,
" And was not to be held in leading strings ;"
And fourthly, what need hardly be said twice,
" That good but rarely came from good advice."

And, therefore, doubtless to approve the truth
Of the last axiom, he advised his spouse
To leave the parties to themselves, forsooth,
At least as far as *bienséance* allows :
That time would temper Juan's faults of youth ;
That young men rarely made monastic vows ;
That opposition only more attaches——
But here a messenger brought in dispatches :

And being of the Council called " the Privy,"
Lord Henry walk'd into his Cabinet,
To furnish matter for some future Livy
To tell how he reduced the nation's debt.

The poet here debates upon the indescribable something
Which pretty women—the sweet souls—call *Soul*,
wanting in most husbands, but especially in Lord Henry:—

A something all-sufficient for the *heart*
Is that for which the Sex are always seeking;
But how to fill up that same vacant part?
There lies the rub—and this they are but weak in.
Frail mariners afloat without a chart,
They run before the wind through high seas breaking:
And when they have made the shore through every shock,
'Tis odd, or odds, it may turn out a rock.

The general guilt of idleness, as an accessory before the fact, is well described in the following stanzas:—

There is a flower called "Love in Idleness,"
For which see Shakspeare's ever blooming garden;—
I will not make his great description less,
And beg his British Godship's humble pardon,
If in my extremity of rhyme's distress,
I touch a single leaf where he is warden;—
But though the flower is different, with the French
Or Swiss Rousseau, cry, "*Voilà la Pervenche!*"
Eureka! I have found it! What I mean
To say is, not that Love is Idleness,
But that in Love such Idleness has been
An accessory, as I have cause to guess.
Hard labour's an indifferent go-between;
Your men of business are not apt to express
Much passion, since the merchant-ship, the Argo,
Convey'd Medea as her Supercargo.

The story of Adeline, we apprehend, will point out a fine study for the circles in which she is fictitiously placed:—

Our gentle Adeline had one defect—
Her heart was vacant, though a splendid mansion;
Her conduct had been perfectly correct,
As she had seen nought claiming its expansion.
A wavering spirit may be easier wreck'd,
Because 'tis frailer, doubtless, than a stanch one
But when the latter works its own undoing,
Its inner crash is like an Earthquake's ruin.
Now when she once had ta'en an interest
In any thing, however she might flatter
Herself that her intentions were the best,
Intense intentions are a dangerous matter:
Impressions were much stronger than she guess'd,
And gather'd as they run like growing water
Upon her mind; the more so, as her breast
Was not at first too readily impress'd.

The innocence with which Adeline is led into a dangerous interference, is thus described. We possibly need not say, that the conclusion of stanza 93 is founded on the celebrated observation of Dr. Franklin, that the best friend which a man of the world can obtain is a sensible French woman, who has no design upon his person or his passions:—

She was, or thought she was, his friend—and this
Without the farce of friendship, or romance
Of Platonism, which leads so oft amiss
Ladies who have studied friendship but in France,

Or Germany, where people *purely* kiss.
 To thus much Adeline would not advance ;
 But of such friendship as man's may to man be,
 She was as capable as woman can be.

No doubt the secret influence of the sex
 Will there, as also in the ties of blood,
 An innocent predominance annex,
 And tune the concord to a finer mood.
 If free from passion, which all friendship checks,
 And your true feelings fully understood,
 No friend like to a woman earth discovers,
 So that you have not been nor will be lovers.

Lord Byron seems to write feelingly on this subject :—

I've also seen some female *friends* ('tis odd,
 But true—as, if expedient, I could prove)
 That faithful were through thick and thin, abroad,
 At home, far more than ever yet was Love—
 Who did not quit me when Oppression trod
 Upon me ; whom no scandal could remove ;
 Who fought, and fight, in absence too, my battles,
 Despite the snake Society's loud rattles.

We must not omit the following anecdote on Friendship, given by way of note :—

In Swift's or Horace Walpole's letters I think it is mentioned, that somebody regretting the loss of a friend, was answered by an universal Pylades: "When I lose one, I go to the Saint James's Coffee-house, and take another."

The Canto breaks off without any certain anticipation of the result of the very dangerous interference of the lady :—

Whether Don Juan and chaste Adeline
 Grew friends in this or any other sense,
 Will be discussed hereafter, I opine ;
 At present I am glad of a pretence
 To leave them hovering, as the effect is fine,
 And keeps the atrocious reader in *suspense* ;
 The surest way for ladies and for books
 To bait their tender or their tenter hooks.

Whether they rode, or walk'd, or studied Spanish
 To read Don Quixote in the original,
 A pleasure before which all others vanish ;
 Whether their talk was of the kind call'd "small,"
 Or serious, are the topics I must banish
 To the next Canto ; where perhaps I shall
 Say something to the purpose, and display
 Considerable talent in my way.

We here finish our brief notice of the forthcoming Cantos of *Don Juan*, which we scarcely need observe is to be regarded as a slight discursive announcement only, leaving more regular and analytical criticism to those to whom, in the present instance, it more formally and properly belongs. The *most* pious and consistent will of course abuse and extract as usual.

Travels through Part of the United States and Canada, in 1818 and 1819. By John Duncan, A. M.

THE author of these two able and highly useful volumes thus observes upon the more particular object of his enquiry during his sojourn in the United States :—

"In the numerous works which have been published, both on the United States and Canada, comparatively little has been said as to the moral condition of the inhabitants, their literary and religious characteristics;—on these, certainly the most important features in the American character, the writer is persuaded that much misapprehension prevails in his native country, and he would gladly be instrumental in removing a part of it. He does not indeed pretend to have given any of these subjects a systematic discussion; but they have been steadily kept in view as particularly deserving of attention, and he hopes that he has succeeded in bringing together a good deal of information, on matters of permanent interest and importance, without altogether excluding topics of a lighter kind, on which a traveller is generally permitted to be somewhat loquacious."

The manner in which Mr. Duncan has executed his task, is highly creditable to his talents and powers of observation. We make no abatement for strong prejudices and prepossessions on the score of his own creed, which are bearable enough when set off by a free and vigorous espousal of the principle of entire liberty of conscience, and an unequivocal assertion of the impropriety of persecution or social annoyance for religious opinion of any kind. Were it not for this healthy and manly assurance, we might be led to remark upon the profusion with which Mr. Duncan puts forward his Kirk of Scotland orthodoxy throughout the publication, and to doubt the qualification of so rigid an adherent to any one strong set of opinions to do justice to all the rest. He, however, who acknowledges the honourable laws of the open field, acquires a right to maintain his own system to the best of his ability, and when and where he pleases: and next, possibly, to that philosophical appreciation and impartiality, which is the rarest of all a traveller's endowments, is the report of an honest and able opinionist, whose bias is at once discoverable, and for which we as naturally make an allowance as the machinist for friction. We should have been equally satisfied, indeed, if Mr. Duncan had been not quite so stanch a Calvinist; if, for instance, like the Episcopalian of New York, whose sentiments he quotes, "he would shrink with horror from consigning Jews, Arians, and Socinians to indiscriminate perdition" but uniting, as he does, with the zeal of his creed, a portion of the vigorous spirit of independence which has associated that stirring species of puritanism with the rise and progress of civil liberty, we do our best to receive complacently the one with the other.

Mr. Duncan landed in New York in May, 1818, and favours us, in the first instance, with a very tolerable general sketch, reserving his more elaborate estimate of that important city to the close of his book. He then proceeds to Boston, when he gives an interesting account of the celebration of the 4th of July, the anniversary of American independence; and in the oration of a Mr. Gray, composed for the occasion, an honourable proof of the moderation and good sense of American republicanism is afforded. The labourers in the rugged vineyard of prison discipline will also find some information here worth attending to. We can but smile at the lachrymals in the following account of Harvard College, coupled as they are with the unwilling acknowledgment of its leading scholastic and literary eminence:—

"The literary and scientific reputation of Harvard University stands very high; and except Yale College, none in this country can contest with it the pre-eminence. It has upwards of twenty Professorships, and between three and four hundred students. There is one feature, however, in its character, which excites the most melancholy reflections; its theological creed is undisguised Socinianism, and it is said

that nearly all the professors are of these sentiments. This must be, to a parent of scriptural sentiments, a powerful reason for sending his sons elsewhere for their college education ; for what are literary or scientific attainments, even of the highest order, when weighed in the balance with purity of religious faith ? It is asserted, indeed, on behalf of the University, that no attempt is made to proselyte its students, and that they are allowed to attend worship with whatever denomination they or their friends may choose. All this may be true so far as regards active and open endeavours to inculcate doctrinal sentiments ; but what is to be the young enquirer's defence from that subtle leaven which is necessarily infused into almost every lecture upon morals and philosophy ; which affects the essentials of the system, and therefore all its ramified details ; and which tinctures every conversation on a religious topic which meets his ear ? Although he were safe from the influence of the lectures, who will warrant him against the ridicule and sophistry of his fellow-students ; by far the greater part of whom are of Unitarian families, and who have been accustomed from their infancy to laugh at every distinguishing principle of that belief to which they deny the character of *rationality* ? Four years' exclusive intercourse with Socinians, spent in acquiring ideas upon every subject of speculative and experimental truth, is an ordeal to which no Christian parent ought to expose his son, however great his confidence in the correctness of his principles and the vigour of his mind.

" From Harvard University press issues the North American Review, beyond all comparison the first literary journal in the United States. The reputed editor is Professor Everett, and it evinces in him and his coadjutors talents and acquirements, literary and philosophical, of a very superior order. Would that its theological opinions were from a purer source !—happily they are but seldom obtruded.

Who can doubt that Professor Everett, when he reads these volumes, would wish himself able to say the same thing of Mr. Duncan ?

The following anecdote is highly honourable to the inhabitants of Boston :—

" Boston is by many reputed the most hospitable of all the large cities in the United States. It becomes not a wanderer, who has experienced kindness and attention wherever he has gone, to exalt one city at the expense of others, but I can with safety say, that I have met with nothing in Boston which is not perfectly in harmony with such a reputation. Let me, however, record an act of the citizens still more honourable than the ordinary deeds of hospitality. In the winter of 1816 a most destructive fire desolated a great part of the town of St. John's, in Newfoundland. When the tidings reached Boston, the sensations of sympathy and commiseration were instantaneous and powerful. They did not, however, exhaust themselves in unavailing expressions of regret ; the townsmen determined that their kindly feelings should be felt as well as heard of. Forgetful that, the year before, the two countries had been enemies to each other ; forgetful of every mercantile jealousy, and the contested right to fishing on the banks, which America was eager to claim and Britain reluctant to concede—they recollected only, that hundreds of their fellow creatures had been burned out of their homes, amid the frosts, and fogs, and snows, of a Newfoundland winter, and that a great part of their winter provisions had perished in the flames. That very day a vessel was chartered, and a full cargo of flour, meat, and other provisions, industriously collected and put on board ; I believe that even the porters and carmen on the wharfs laboured gratuitously ; and on the third day the vessel left the harbour, to brave the hardships and the dangers of a winter passage to that inhospitable shore. He who prompted the act of humanity, watched over the means employed to accomplish it ; the vessel reached Newfoundland in safety, entered the port, discharged her cargo, and returned, with the overflowing thanks and benedictions of many a grateful heart."

We are next led to the state of Connecticut ; and, in the account of Newhaven, we are favoured with some additional curious particulars of the fate of Goffe and Whalley, the fugitive Judges of Charles I. An elaborate, and apparently *impartial* comparison is also drawn by Mr. Duncan between the course of education at Yale College and that at the University of Glasgow. Indeed, to the state of academical education throughout the United States, our traveller necessarily pays considerable attention. The result is encouraging as to gradual improve-

ment, but, the progress is slow, as the great body of the Americans cannot yet be made fully to feel the advantages of these establishments, and are more favourable to common grammar-schools. None of the Colleges are therefore so richly endowed as possibly they ought to be, in conformity with American pretension; but we strongly suspect, that in the present political stage of the United States, the too ample endowment of them would be a still greater evil.

The account of Philadelphia is very informing. We select the following particulars:—

“ In a literary point of view, Philadelphia enjoys a respectable rank among American cities, but as yet Boston is far before any other. I was not a little surprised to learn by the ‘Picture of Philadelphia,’ that in 1811 it contained fifty-one printing offices, employing one hundred and fifty-three presses, and I believe that since that period the number has increased. A considerable proportion of these must be supported by newspapers, of which there are no fewer than eight published daily, besides many once, twice, and three times a week; but after deducting what are necessary for these, there must remain a very respectable number devoted to literature of a more permanent and aspiring kind.

“ Philadelphia has produced the finest and most accurate specimens of typography that have yet appeared in America, and there is a decided superiority in most of the works printed here, to those executed either in Boston or New York. There are two letter foundries, and several printing-press makers. The Columbian press, invented by a person of the name of Clymer, a native of Philadelphia, appears to be in many respects very superior to any other that I have yet seen.*

“ Many periodical works have at various times been published here, some of which are still continued; and though their success has been in no instance equal to that which is at present enjoyed by the North American Review, yet some of them exhibit a large proportion of respectable talent.† For reprints of the heavier British books, Philadelphia is quite famous. The Encyclopædia Britannica was begun in 1790, by Mr. Dobson, an enterprising countryman of ours. When the first half volume was published, of which 1000 were printed, he had but 246 subscribers; they increased however so rapidly that of volume second 2000 were thrown off; the first was soon after reprinted, and in a short time he found it extremely difficult to procure a sufficient number of printers and engravers, to carry forward the work with sufficient rapidity. Dr. Rees’ larger work, and that of Dr. Brewster, are at present in progress. The Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews are regularly reprinted at New York; and several of our other popular periodical works in different parts of the Union.

“ It is a mistake to suppose that books are cheaper in America than in Britain. The works of our modern authors, indeed, which at home are exclusive property, loaded with an enormous copy right, and which we can purchase only in the shape of handsome octavos or more elegant quartos, suffer here instantaneous transmutation into an humble duodecimo, occasionally of most plebeian aspect, and for two dollars or less you may obtain the verbal contents of most of the Albemarle Street two guinea volumes; but in all books of which the copy right has expired, our British editions are superior in execution and accuracy and quite as low in price, as those which are published in America.

“ In historical engraving I have seen no specimens of American art which are very superior. Westall’s illustrations of our modern poets have nearly all been copied, but there is a harshness in the engraving which contrasts very disadvantageously with the productions of Heath. In the execution of bank notes, however,

* Mr. Clymer has subsequently come over to London, and obtained a British patent for his press, which has been extensively adopted and is universally approved of. The first of them that came to Scotland has now been at work for four years in our office, where we have presses on six different constructions, but though two or three of the kinds are excellent, our workmen consider the Columbian as decidedly the best they have ever pulled. (1823.)

† The Analectic Magazine, published in Philadelphia, was for a considerable time edited by the elegant author of the Sketch Book, and Bracebridge Hall. Some of the papers of the former work were first published in the Analectic.

Philadelphia may challenge the world. Messrs. Murray, Draper, Fairman, and Co. have distinguished themselves by some remarkably ingenious discoveries, which have been applied with singular success to this branch of the art; and their notes, which you meet with in every quarter of the Union, are distinguished by an originality of style and delicacy of execution which much surpass those of our native country, and if they do not afford a perfect protection from forgery, must at least render it exceedingly difficult.*"

The following account of a flour-mill at Baltimore indicates a department of the arts in which, from the genius of the people, and their projecting and speculative habits in advertence to inventions of practical utility, the skill and ingenuity of the mother country will be and is most successfully rivalled. After all too, the first steam-boat was certainly propelled in a transatlantic stream:—

"Baltimore is celebrated for the fineness of its flour; the superiority of which arises from the perfection at which they have arrived in the machinery by which it is manufactured. I have recently visited a mill driven by steam, in which manual labour is so completely excluded, that the sailor who delivers the grain at the wharf is the last person who applies his hand to it, till it descends into the barrel in the shape of superfine flour. It is difficult to convey a proper idea of machinery without the aid of drawings, but I trust you will be able to comprehend the following rude outline of the process. A covered trough which projects from the mill to the edge of the wharf, receives the grain as it is emptied from the vessel; within this trough, is an axle revolving longitudinally, around which are thin pieces of wood projecting into the trough, and continued along in a spiral line. As the revolution of the screw of Archimedes raises water, so this axle by revolving among the grain forces it backward in a regular current from the wharf to the mill. The grain on reaching the inner end of this trough is received into a succession of little tin buckets, which are strung upon an endless belt revolving upon two wheels, the higher of which is in the garret floor. As these buckets turn over the upper wheel they empty their contents into a box, from which the grain is conveyed to the fanners, where it is thoroughly cleaned. From the fanners it is conducted into the hoppers, in the floor below; here eight pairs of stones are kept constantly at work. From the stones the flour descends into a long wooden trough, similar to that into which the grain was first thrown; and another spiral screw, revolving here, urges it gradually forward to another series of buckets, which carry it to an upper story, and discharge it under a machine for cooling it. This consists of a spindle revolving perpendicularly, with a horizontal shaft crossing it near the floor, in the under part of which are teeth formed of thin slips of wood, which nearly touch the floor, and which are so disposed in relation to each other, that while they stir the flour round, they at the same time convey it inwards to the centre. The flour is thus spread thinly over the floor, and as the teeth revolve among it, it describes circles successively smaller and smaller, until it falls through an opening into the bolting machines in the story below. Here are three bolting cylinders, producing the various degrees of common, fine, and superfine flour; and from them it is finally received into barrels, ready for inspection and shipping. This mill manufactures with ease a thousand bushels a day; and the flour which it produces, always commands an advance on the average market price."

The monstrous and indefensible conduct of our army in Washington, it seems, settled a very dubious point—namely, whether that rising capital should remain the seat of American government or not?—

"What the natives were at a loss to decide, the British may be said to have decided for them. The burning of the Capitol and the President's house during last

* A more minute account of this inimitable style of engraving might have been given, but that its appearance is now familiar to all who take any interest in such subjects; and specimens from the London establishment of Messrs. Perkins and Heath, are to be met with every day. Its value may be appreciated by the fact, that none have spoken so highly of it as the best engravers of our native country. The most curious and most useful part of the discovery, is that process by which metal plates of the same design may be multiplied by pressure, to any extent, and with as much facility as impressions are obtained on paper (1823).

war, has settled the question, and it seems to be now ascertained to the satisfaction of speculators, that Washington is to continue, at least for a considerable time to come, in the undisturbed enjoyment of her metropolitan privileges. How an event so disastrous should lead to consequences so propitious, may seem in some measure a paradox, but it is one of easy explanation. When the rebuilding of these edifices came to be the subject of deliberation in Congress, the question as to the removal of the seat of the legislature was necessarily discussed; national feeling, however, co-operated powerfully with other considerations to influence the decision; the proposal was at once scouted, and the requisite amount was enthusiastically voted to efface the memorials of British triumph. Preparations were instantly made to rebuild the Capitol and the President's house with more than their original splendour, the value of building ground and of houses took an immediate start, and Washington now exhibits abundant proof of the enterprize and elasticity of the national character."

Again:—

"Of all the errors committed on our part during that unhappy war, this was undoubtedly one of the greatest. Setting aside the question as to its abstract defensibility, on the ground of retaliation or otherwise, it is obvious that it was in the highest degree impolitic; because its immediate effect, as might have been anticipated, was to break down party-spirit among the Americans, and to unite them as one man in support of the measures of their Government. The firebrand was no sooner applied to their Chief Magistrate's Palace and the National Senate House, than thousands who had from the beginning maintained a systematic opposition to the contest, at once came forward and took up arms to maintain it; their national feelings were roused into powerful excitement, and they joined in one loud voice of execration at the destruction of their national edifices. Our Ministers, had such been their object, could not have devised a more effectual way of strengthening Mr. Madison's hands. Had our troops recorded their triumph upon the front of the buildings, and left them uninjured, the indignant feeling of humiliation would have wreaked itself on those by whose imbecility the capture of the city had been occasioned, and who escaped so nimbly when it fell into the enemy's hands. But the burning of the buildings saved Mr. Madison; a thirst for revenge of the insult overcame every other feeling, and the war became thenceforward, what it had not been before, decidedly popular and national."

Along with the Capitol and the President's house, the public offices were also destroyed, and no less than five libraries, and many public documents and papers connected with the revolution. We might imagine an invasion of Goths or Huns rather than of a British army headed by British gentlemen! The future historians of America, in allusion to Rome, might possibly compare it to the intrusion of the Gauls, had not their own authorities risked anything but a Gaulish massacre. The feeling of the Americans on this subject is pithily commemorated on the defaced monument which had been erected to the memory of some of their own officers:—

*Mutilated by Britons,
25 August, 1814.*

In giving an account of Trumbull's picture of the Declaration of Independence, which is a collection of portraits, Mr. Duncan supplies the following note:—

"Of the fifty-six individuals, whose signatures are affixed to the Declaration of Independence, only the following five were living while I was in America; so far as I know the number has not been subsequently reduced:—Thomas Jefferson, of Virginia; John Adams, of Massachusetts; Charles Carroll, of Maryland; William Floyd, of New York; William Ellery, of Rhode Island.

Having given an extract derogatory to our national character, it is with pleasure we supply the following anecdote, forming part of a very pleasing account of Mount Vernon, the well-known residence of General Washington, and now his honoured burying-place:—

"I was quite gratified to hear from a gentleman of Judge Washington's family, that when the British ships of war passed Mount Vernon, they honoured the memory of the departed hero by lowering their fore-top-sails; and their bands, as another gentleman informed me, played Washington's march. That was indeed a manifestation of most correct and honourable feeling on the part of the commanding officer."

In speaking of Albany, we are instructed in the nature of a peculiar result of the collision of interests in the United States, or rather of a salutary republican jealousy; for such we esteem the cause, whatever the pressing or temporary inconvenience of the effect:—

"Albany, though a small town in comparison of New York, has been for a long time the seat of the State Legislature. It seems a remarkable feature in the domestic politics of America, that both the Supreme and State Governments select remote towns, or, more properly speaking, villages, as the scene of their legislative labours, in preference to the populous cities upon the sea coast; notwithstanding the many inconveniences which must necessarily result from being thus in a manner excluded from the living world, from access to recent intelligence, and from means of ascertaining the minds of their more intelligent fellow-citizens in sudden and difficult emergencies. We have an annoyance at home somewhat similar in kind, although much smaller in degree, in those parts of the country where some old decayed borough tenaciously maintains its dignity as county town, taking precedence of the younger commercial or manufacturing cities, which have greatly outgrown it in wealth and population; but with us this is an unwished-for consequence of the gradual change which manufactures and commerce have produced in the country, and is an evil which we tolerate because it is not very easily removed. In America, on the other hand, it is a matter of deliberate and voluntary choice, resulting from the republican constitution and the prevalent system of universal suffrage. A jealousy exists, throughout the agricultural districts, of the influence of the larger cities; and no sooner do they begin to concentrate a considerable portion of the wealth and talent of the State, than the landholders take the alarm, and vote the legislature away, some hundred or two of miles into the interior. In this way the Legislature of Pennsylvania was sent from Philadelphia to Lancaster, a small town sixty-two miles off, containing about six thousand inhabitants; and subsequently to Harrisburgh, thirty-five miles farther, with only between two and three thousand. It may thus travel onward till it is ultimately stopped by the State of Ohio, or the shores of Lake Erie; and for the capital of New York, it may be necessary hereafter to search somewhere about the falls of Niagara, or the lake of a Thousand Isles."

The great canal just completed, which connects Lake Erie with the Hudson, joins the latter in the neighbourhood of Albany. We learn from the most recent American papers the triumphant conclusion of this stupendous undertaking, which Mr. Duncan thus describes in a note, in which he has collected the genuine particulars from the most correct authorities:—

"The western canal, which was begun in 1817, and is now navigable for two-thirds of its whole length, commences at Black Rock at the bottom of Lake Erie, runs parallel to the river Niagara till it joins the Tonawanta creek, makes use of its bed for eleven miles, and then stretches along, with but little deviation from a straight line, till it approaches the Mohawk river, at a small town called Rome, a few miles above Utica; thence it runs parallel to the south side of the Mohawk, till it joins the Hudson near Albany. Its whole length will be 363 miles, and the country through which it passes is singularly adapted for canal navigation. After leaving Lake Erie, it rises by locks 48 feet, to the summit level, and thence descends at intervals 601 feet, to the level of the Hudson. In the whole extent there are 77 locks. Two levels extend severally 65 miles and 69½ miles, without locks, and between two points 240 miles apart there was not, it is said, a single yard of rock which it was necessary to remove. Connected with this astonishing undertaking, is a corresponding branch beginning at Waterford on the Hudson, eleven miles above Albany, and running northward to Whitehall, formerly called Skenesborough, at the bottom of Lake Champlain. A glance at the map of the United States will at once show what an enormous extent of inland trade is thus laid open to the city of New York. The Champlain canal is 61 miles long; the whole length therefore of the two will be

424 miles. Each canal is 40 feet wide at the surface, 28 at the bottom, and 4 feet deep; the locks are 90 feet long, and 14 feet broad. The estimated expense of the Erie canal was five millions of dollars, and of the other, one million; in all, 1,350,000*l.* sterling; but by an unusual result in such undertakings, it is ascertained, from what is already finished, that they will be completed for probably 200,000*l.* less. The literary journal to which I have already alluded says, that the average cost of the Erie canal per mile, is 13,800 dollars, 3105*l.* sterling, while the cost of canals in England has generally been about 5060*l.* sterling, per mile, notwithstanding the difference in the price of labour."

The fact of a great national undertaking amounting to 200,000*l.* less than the estimated cost, appears to us still more extraordinary than the fact of cutting a canal 363 miles long; for we can account for the one result by an arithmetical progression, but no sort of British experience will enable us to comprehend the completion of a vast national work under the estimated expense. A republican lesson on this subject would be extremely useful, as Woolwich, Strand Bridge, and Caledonian Canal expenditure fully prove. But to resume:—

"Of the ultimate effects of this canal, and the spirit for such undertakings which it has diffused through the whole country, it is impossible," says Mr. Duncan, "to form an adequate conception. There is not a doubt that these canals will also carry off a large amount of trade which would otherwise have found its way down the St. Lawrence to Canada. When the country on the Canadian side of Erie, and the lakes above it, is settled, the farmers will find a much nearer market for their grain by the smooth navigation of the canal, than by the *portage* at the Falls of Niagara, and down the furious rapids of the St. Lawrence, besides gaining nearly two months in the year of those which they now lose by the ice. The Champlain canal has already begun to bring down to New York a lucrative trade, from the banks of that lake which heretofore went northward to Montreal. In fact, much of the moral and political as well as commercial aspect of this vast continent, will, in the course probably of a few years, undergo a very great revolution. The Erie canal has done more to endanger to the British crown the loss of Upper Canada, than all that war-like operations could ever have effected."

We had seriously intended to close our notice of these very interesting volumes in one article, but the extracts have so grown upon us, and we find so many more particulars which are generally interesting, we feel ourselves tempted to extend it to another number. This is the more necessary, as the author resumes his general summing up for the conclusion of the work; and we have found ourselves unable to pass on to it as uninterruptedly as we expected. Moreover, we feel some desire, on our own part, to conclude with a detail of the general impression, in regard to the rising energies of the United States, which this very characteristic work has left on our minds. For these reasons therefore, and others which it would be superfluous to enumerate, we shall reserve the conclusion of this article for next week.

COUNTRY CHURCH-YARDS.

A pick-axe and a spade, a spade
For — and a shrouding sheet!
O! a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.—HAMLET.

I LOVE a country church-yard. I love to wander among the contrasted grave stones where the rich lie in no contemptuous fashion by the side of the poor, and where the only distinction between wealth and penury is in the few additional feet allotted to ambitious pride to

record on the polished marble that such a man was born, such a man lived, and such a man died—and there ends the tale.

But independently of this contrast which naturally leads to lowering notions of humanity, there is something so serene, so calming, and so unworldly within the precincts of a church-yard, that to me it is impossible to pass one where the rudely built church is caught at intervals between the gloomy yews, and perchance the well-grown oaks, and where the moss-grown dwarf wall, running between the holy sanctuary and the busy road, marks the boundary of death and the never-failing sanctuary that gives peace to trouble and rest to fatigue. Here the houseless wanderer finds a home. My body, mind-guided, bends involuntarily towards the neat turn-style, that modestly retiring admits the solitary visitor, and I wander with infinite pleasure through the straight lines and right angles formed by the careful sexton in digging his graves. Each grave-stone is to me "a simple annal," and whether I read of the good father, the kind child, the affectionate mother, or even nothing but the name of the lifeless being that there lies dormant, I have the faculty within that enables me to pursue their actions in my own course. The very turn of the stone, the smoothness or neglect of the grave, the freshness of its verdure, are to me all traits that help to make a picture out of what sort of a being that was that now lies impotent and motionless. But when I meet with the quaint epitaph, the pithy sentence, that in half a dozen lines is to record the virtues of perhaps a century's growth, I stand and decypher the half-legible letters with a *gout* and delight that is truly vivifying. I like to read of a woman that has passed her weary days in solicitude and anxious care for the welfare of her husband and her family, or of the man who has struggled with hardships, hoping, and toiling, and hoping that he shall by and by be able to climb at least a little hill, and look round with pleasure on the happy horizon of his own making; and though the uncouthness of the wording or the mistakes in the orthography may call from pedantry and criticism a satirical smile, I forget that there is such a thing as grammar in the world, or if I remember it, it is only to feel the more certain that the eulogy is true, and that the genuine hand of affection, overcoming its native bashfulness, has taken up the pen to record the virtues of appreciated merit.

Epitaph-hunting is one of my hobbies. I read and read and read, and never willingly quit the place if I am conscious of leaving one behind. This feeling has given me many treats, and I have often found my trouble richly rewarded, after poring over a number of common-place tomb-stones (most of which, however, have their claims for me) to find some rich morceau lurking beneath the shade of a sinking stone, that some years hence it would be in vain to try to decypher. It is to this passion that I owe my first acquaintance with Ben Jonson's admirable epitaph, which I discovered in some church-yard, I forget what, inscribed on the tomb-stone of the lady of a nursery-man:—

Underneath this stone doth lie
As much virtue as could die,
Which, when alive, did vigour give
To as much beauty as could live.
Virtue, worth, and goodness joined,
Formed the essence of her mind.

I had never read or heard it before, and it entirely took me by surprise; if I remember right, I had been reading just before my perpetual plague, "Affliction sore, long time I bore, &c." Conceive my delight in popping on such a *bijoux* as this. I am sure I must have read it a dozen times before I was satisfied, and at length marched off with it in my memory to display with proud delight at home. I was then very young, and the first thing I did was to announce my incalculable prize, the value of which, however, was nominally though not intrinsically lessened by the information I received, that it was well known as Ben Jonson's, and therefore, though I might have made a beautiful discovery for myself, I had made none for the world. It is many years ago since I read this epitaph, perhaps I have never repeated it since, I certainly never wrote it down, yet the words instantly offered themselves to my memory, and I shall love it ever, for it has the additional merit to me, above its real worth, that I discovered it in some obscure nook, and was able to appreciate its excellence. I believe, at that time, it helped not a little to flatter my vanity.

There is something in the architecture of country churches that admirably tallies with my kindly feelings towards the receptacles of the dead that surround them. The rude square tower of Saxon growth, formed of unhewn stones, or broken flints, mixed in a thick mortar; the superadded peak, by courtesy called a spire, that has sprung from it in a later age for decency's sake, and in many instances the here and there slips that have been joined to the main body of the building for the reception of the increasing parish, all serve to render the scene charmingly rustic, and to point out that here you may throw away all the false politenesses and ceremonies of the world, and indulge at large in the native growth of your own sensations. A church-yard is a sort of Palace of Truth, where the mind, to itself at least, is to be opened in unrestrained discourse, and to pour forth its original feelings with all the untutored freedom that nature prompts.

If we quit the immediate precincts of this place of charm, there is still something in its neighbourhood to remind us where we are, and to please the imagination. The neat parsonage is sure to be near with its smooth lawn and well-cleaned windows, smiling on the road-side traveller a pleasing benediction; and usually the decent alms-houses attached to the parish are to be met with here, where drooping age finds a crutch to sustain it against the last buffets of a rude world. A thickset hedge, or perchance a row of shaking aspens, emblems of the ancient forms that flit around them, will often divide the little portion of ground set aside for these remnants of men from the land of their last home, that is ever near to remind them softly that there they must end; and in those quiet scenes they see the conclusion of every thing.

The church-yard of the place where I went to school was, and always will be, dear to me. It stood almost at the entrance of the village, with a neat white railing, a more modern invention for the dwarf wall, in front, to separate it from the road; and the church-yard, through which the frequently-intersecting path wound to the porch, was thickly set with tombs of all sizes and descriptions. In one corner I well remember a stately monument of smooth stone, topped with a vast sarcophagus, that round its ample sides announced "the birth, paren-

tage, and education" of the once proud mortal that lay there in mournful dust; near it grew some stately firs, and often towards the autumnal equinox I have seen the angry wind shake down the nuts in mimic shower on this piece of human ingenuity, and watched them bound from one angle to another of the walk as they presented themselves in jutting proportion. Near the church door stood a capacious yew, the largest I certainly ever saw, and I have heard it eulogised as the finest in England; its sturdy trunk sprang from the earth just where several of the paths met in one large arena before the venerable porch; over this space the luxuriant branches of the yew spread themselves, and with their thick foliage formed a natural portico against the dazzling sun or pelting torrent. Another monument I likewise well remember, though whose existence it records has entirely escaped me, was a little square, surrounded by iron railings, and gradually falling to pieces; the main device, and what I suppose has principally impressed it on my memory, were four little naked boys, Cupids I then thought them, though now I can hardly believe that the God of Love could find his way to the throne of Death. Be they what they might, there they stood with picturesque patience supporting the flat tablet which finished the whole design. I have some faint recollection that they had torches in their hands, but whether this was really so, or only the after-offspring of my own brain, owing to my thinking them Cupids, I cannot assert.

Sweet village, and sweeter church-yard! in thee, near thee, and round thee, I have wandered many a summer's day, full of my own boyish reveries, and solitary as my own thoughts, save now and then I would meet an old care-worn yet well-known countenance, that would kindly greet me with the words of cheering humanity; and then, the acknowledgment of human beings over, would pass on his way, and leave me again to the glory of a summer sky, and the undisciplined starts of my own foolish brain, that seemed to partake of the sentiment of the very woods through which I wandered; and burst to and fro in as uncontrouled a course as the wild branchings of the sweet green-wood forest, where the wind whistled, the birds sang, and I wandered—all alike free.

BIFRONS.

COMMON PLACES.

LXXVI.

Mankind are an incorrigible race. Give them but bugbears and idols—it is all that they ask; the distinctions of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood, of good and evil, are worse than indifferent to them.

LXXVII.

The DEVIL was a great loss in the preternatural world. He was always something to fear and to hate. He supplied the antagonist powers of the imagination, and the arch of true religion hardly stands firm without him. Mr. Irving may perhaps bring him into fashion again.

LXXVIII.

Perhaps the evils arising from excessive inequality in a state would be sufficiently obviated, if property were divided equally among the surviving children. But it is said it would be impossible to make a law for this purpose, under any circumstances or with any

qualifications, because the least interference with the disposal of property would be striking at its existence and at the very root of all property. And yet this objection is urged in those very countries, where the law of primogeniture (intended to keep it in disproportionate masses, and setting aside the will of the testator altogether) is established as an essential part of the law of the land. So blind is reason, where passion or prejudice intervenes!

LXXIX.

I should like, once in my life, to spit in the face of a legitimate monarch, who claimed me and the rest of mankind as his property. Whoever he might be that openly or in his secret mind did this, assuredly, with a fit opportunity, the sacredness of his person would not prevent me from thus expressing my opinion of him and his claims.

LXXX.

Kings, who set up for Gods upon earth, should be treated as madmen, which one half of them, or as idiots, which the other half, really are.

LXXXI.

Tyrants are at all times mad with the lust of power.

LXXXII.

Reformers are naturally speculative people; and speculative people are effeminate and inactive. They brood over ideas, till realities become almost indifferent to them. They talk when they should act, and are distracted with nice doubts and distinctions, while the enemy is thundering at the gates, and the bomb-shells are bursting at their feet. They hold up a paper Constitution as their shield, which the sword pierces through, and drinks their heart's blood! They are cowards, too, at bottom; and dare not strike a decisive blow, lest it should be retaliated. While they merely prate of moderation and the public good, they think, if the worst comes to the worst, there may still be a chance of retreat for them, hoping to screen themselves behind their imbecility. They are not like their opponents whose all is at stake, and who are urged on by instinctive fury and habitual cunning to defend it: the common good is too remote a speculation to call forth any violent passions or personal sacrifices; and if it should be lost, is as fine a topic as ever to harangue and lament about. Patriots are, by the constitution of their minds, poets; and an Elegy on the fall of Liberty is as interesting to hear or to recite as an Ode on its most triumphant success. They who let off Ferdinand the other day, confiding in the promises of a traitor and in the liberality of a despot, were greater hypocrites to themselves than he was.

LONDON:—Published by HENRY L. HUNT, 38, Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, and 22, Old Bond-street. Price Fourpence; or, if stamped for country circulation free of postage. Sevenpence. Sold by all Booksellers and Newsvenders in town; and by the following Agents in the country:—

Edinburgh, Messrs. Bell and Bradfute.
 Glasgow, W. R. Macphun.
 Exeter, T. Smith.
 T. Besley, jun. High-street.
 Leeds, James Mann, Duncan-street.
 Liverpool, T. Smith.
 Birmingham, J. Drake.
 Dublin, A. M. Graham, College-green.
 Leicester, T. Thompson.

Bath, at the London Newspaper Office.
 Bristol, Hillyard and Morgan.
 Sunderland, W. Chalk, High-street.
 Dundee, T. Donaldson.
 Norwich, Burks and Kinnebrook, Mercury Office.
 Yarmouth, W. Meggy.
 Armagh, P. Moller.
 Taunton, J. Kerswell, High-street.

Printed by C. W. REYNELL, Broad-street, Golden-square.